

I did my graduate work in broadcasting and have been pleased to make my career the media industry. I used to be proud of our democracy's fair and equal coverage of varying viewpoints and, particularly, political messages. Recently, however, media consolidation has placed the power to persuade in the hands of too few people, many of whom have been using that power to purchase sweetheart deals. Nowhere has this abuse of power been more appalling than in Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary just days before the election. That action is not only a far cry from journalistic integrity: it is out-and-out propaganda.

Since Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, it is obligated by law to serve the public interest. The public interest in an election season is in giving equal time to all viable candidates. Sinclair's actions fly in the face of fairness--and of democracy.

When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need to feed our democracy. The power-mongers don't care about that, but we--the people--do!

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, rather than weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard.

Let's go back to the strict FCC rules we enjoyed when I was growing up; the rules that made me want to enter the media field and contribute to the "greater good"; the rules that made me proud to be an American.

I ask you to restore free and equal flow to all ideas, now, before we've lost the precious freedoms we memorialized in the Constitution. An educated public can be trusted to govern themselves.

Thank you.